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Anatomy of a protest

Clamor, then calm marks demonstration against CIA recruiting

By Jerry Moth
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After the pushing and shoving, after the traditional chants, after an audience between a CIA recruiter and a coterie of University of Iowa protesters, a lobby in the student union became silent.

A single, cardboard anti-CIA poster remained propped against a wall; the rest of the posters packed away for another day. Nearby, union workers tied balloons to chandeliers in the main lounge and put Halloween decorations on tables in preparation for a party for students from a dormitory.

Gone was the rhetoric, the guards posted by a stairwell and television cameras and reporters. Unlocked was the door to another stairwell. Restored was the service to an elevator kept out of service for two days while CIA recruiters talked to prospective employees.

Life in a lobby returned to normal at 5:45 p.m. Thursday, a calm that emerged frequently during an afternoon of tension and intimidation.

It was in contrast to a raucous confrontation between the protesters and UI security guards and an administrator about five hours earlier.

The protesters, after milling about in the lobby for about 20 minutes, surged forward, attempting to get by the guards at the stairs to the third floor where a CIA recruiter was conducting interviews.

Four security guards and Phillip Jones, UI dean of students, grimaced as they pushed about a half dozen protesters back. In the struggle, David Harvey, 24, a UI student majoring in English, was pinned on a nearby table by Jones and a security guard.

"Send the representative down," Jamie Rawson, a UI senior, shouted into a bull horn. "We don't want to confront this violently."

The scuffle ended, and Harvey sitting near the bottom of the steps,

shouted, "An administrator is throwing students around. That's really an educated way of handling things. Is that the thing now?"

In the lobby, a calm that followed the scuffle was broken by a question and answer chant: "What do we want? Access. When do we want it? Now." The words produced no action.

About 1:30 p.m., Philip Hubbard, UI vice president for student services, came down the steps and told the students, that the recruiter said he would to listen to their complaints for three minutes after he finished his interviews.

"Anything is contingent on you're ceasing to block the area," Hubbard said. The protesters left.

At 5 p.m., six protesters were led up to the Triangle Lounge on the second floor. They waited in silence. Hubbard cautioned the students that the recruiter was not expecting a raucous confrontation.

When the recruiter appeared, wearing a three-piece gray suit, the students took turns calmly reading 11 prepared questions. An example: Are you here to recruit students to overthrow democratically-elected governments?

When the students finished and the reporters' microphones swung toward him, the recruiter said, "I don't agree with what you say, but I would defend with my life your right to say it." He left.

Back in the lobby, the students loudly claimed partial victory. But said Mike Price, "We will not rest until the CIA is banned from campus."

Hubbard said the day's activities upheld the tenets of two basic rights: The right of free speech of the protesters and the right of students to interview for jobs with whomever they want.

People left when the television cameras were switched off. As she walked down a hallway, Rawson was asked what was on tap for tomorrow. "Sleep," she said. "Lots of it."